

Cathedral Church of Saint John (St. John's Cathedral)

135 Anderson Avenue, Winnipeg MB



Primary elevations, from the southeast



Secondary elevations, from the northeast



Interior view of an altar window

LINKS AND DOCUMENTS

[Province of Manitoba Website](#)
[The Diocese of Rupertsland Website](#)
[Saint John's Cathedral Website](#)
[Churches and Cathedrals in Winnipeg Website](#)

Construction Dates: 1926 to 1959

Formally Recognized: 2004

Listed on Canadian Register: 2006

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

DESCRIPTION

The Cathedral Church of Saint John (Anglican) is set in an historic residential neighbourhood in north-central Winnipeg. The stone church, built in 1926 and expanded in 1959, is surrounded by its early nineteenth-century cemetery on a large tree-protected site on the Red River. The provincial designation applies to the church, cemetery and 10 lots they occupy.

HERITAGE VALUE

The Cathedral Church of Saint John, the fourth church built on its property, represents the oldest Anglican parish in Western Canada. Established in 1822 by John West, a Church of England clergyman sent to the Red River Settlement by the Hudson's Bay Company, the church ministered to the needs of settlers and fur traders and became the centre of the Anglican Church's missionary, educational and administrative activity in the West. The cathedral also is an excellent example of the Late Gothic Revival style. Its dignified design by Winnipeg architects Gilbert Parfitt and Edgar Prain reflects the medieval vernacular tradition of English parish churches through its sprawling horizontal mass, Norman tower and pointed window and door openings. Of additional significance are the building's magnificent stained-glass windows and the stone and other features it incorporates from earlier churches on the site. The building is an outstanding historical, architectural and religious landmark in Manitoba, one that remains a vital presence in the lives of its members, some military regiments and the wider community.

Source: Manitoba Heritage Council Minutes, January 13, 1996

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

SITE:

- location near the west bank of the Red River, on a north-south axis, within expansive, well-maintained grounds that hold the gravesites of Red River settlers and other historical figures

EXTERIOR (Late Gothic Revival style and cathedral church functions):

- substantial and complex two-storey-plus form, based on a cruciform plan, including an elongated nave, transepts and chancel, all with gable roofs
- dominant square Norman bell tower that rises in the southeast corner from a pointed double-door entrance to a modestly crenellated parapet
- various subsidiary volumes, including one- and two-storey entrance porches on the east and west sides, all with gable roofs; also, a one-storey northwest corner chapel and two-storey northeast corner addition, both with flat roofs
- exceptional stonework, including rusticated random-laid limestone walls and angle buttresses contrasted by smooth-cut stone openings and other detailing

- variety of window shapes and sizes, including the main Gothic pointed windows with Y-tracery, the large altar opening with panel tracery, the three-part pointed arched windows in the nave and transepts, etc.; as well, the pointed door openings throughout, with doors of heavy vertical members highlighted with heavy iron hardware
- additional details, including stone quoins in window surrounds, large pointed louvered openings in the belfry, stone coping on the raised gable ends, stone drip- and hood-moulds, the stone cross on the north gable end, etc.

INTERIOR:

- largely unaltered spaces of the front vestibules, the high barrel-vaulted nave with groins and two wide aisles dividing the pews, the side transepts and raised chancel
- nave's dark-stained, arch-braced wood ceiling, its diagonal and horizontal planks patterned by the skeleton system of purlins and arches
- oak-panelled chancel, choir and altar, each panel containing a Christian symbol
- colourful, highly detailed stained-glass windows throughout
- other Gothic Revival features carried through from the exterior, including pointed arches with carved detailing above the chancel, doorways and recessed windows
- fine finishes and materials, such as the dark-stained woodwork; hardwood flooring; plaster walls; smooth stonework, including the vestibule door surrounds and elaborate arch supports; iron door hardware with Gothic imagery; etc.
- exquisite furniture and fixtures, including the Casavant pipe organ and octagonal pulpit made of oak, pendant light fixtures with Gothic detailing, etc